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CITY OF OTSEGO

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June 17, 2003

Ms. Shari Kolak
Remedial Project Manager
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 5 (SR-6J)
77 West Jackson Blvd.
Chicago, Illinois 60604-3507

Re: Kalamazoo River Superfund Site

Dear Ms. Kolak:

I am writing on behalf of the City of Otsego, Michigan regarding a crucial issue in remediation of the Kalamazoo River Superfund Site. As you know, the City of Otsego owns one of the dams in the Kalamazoo River. The City has no need for or desire to continue the existence of the dam, and cannot afford to conduct the long-term maintenance or repairs that will be necessary. Therefore, when the EPA considers the array of possible remedial actions for the Kalamazoo River Superfund Site, you should assume that the dam will not be present.

As you may know, the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality has directed the City to make significant repairs to the dam. The repairs needed to make the dam last for another 4 to 5 years will cost \$400,000 to \$500,000. With financial assistance from the State of Michigan, the City is willing to make those interim repairs in order to reduce the risk of a catastrophic dam failure such as happened recently in the Upper Peninsula. However, further repairs and maintenance necessary to allow the dam to last just 10 years would cost \$2 million to \$2.5 million, and making the dam last longer would cost even more. The City and its taxpayers will not bear those costs. Therefore, there is no realistic basis for the EPA to evaluate remedial options in which the dam is present.

Regarding the state-owned dams in this reach of the Kalamazoo River, the MDEQ's December 13, 2002 letter to William Munro stated :

"Given that the conditions of the dams are such that future repairs are not possible, ultimately, the dams will either fail or be removed. Thus, any alternative that depends on the perpetual existence of the Plainwell, Otsego, or Trowbridge dams cannot be deemed feasible, implementable, or permanent. The state will not support selection of any alternative that requires these dams to remain."

Come to work, come to play, come to stay!

Ms. Shari Kolak

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The City's position regarding the City dam is fully consistent with that of the MDEQ regarding the state-owned dams.

Thank you for your consideration. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Thad Beard".

Thad Beard
City Manager
City of Otsego

tmb